

Developer Joins Community in Fighting Freight Project in Elkridge

Oxford Square developer puts opposition to Hanover/Race Road intermodal site on record.

By [Elizabeth Janney](#)
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A major developer told the Elkridge community Tuesday he is against an industrial train-truck transfer station being considered for the area and he and his lawyers are “looking forward to the fight” against the state and CSX.

David Scheffenacker, the developer of Oxford Square, a residential and commercial project on Coca Cola Drive, was applauded by residents at the Dec. 6 Greater Elkridge Community Association (GECA) meeting billed as a forum for the “real story” behind the intermodal project.

“We are against the freight yard,” Scheffenacker told the audience, “because of our investment in the property down there.”

Transportation officials are exploring the possibility of building an intermodal facility—a depot where trains and trucks can swap freight—at four sites in Maryland, one of which is on Hanover and Race Roads, less than two miles from Oxford Square.

“We’re developing, and we have a vested interest,” said Scheffenacker. “When this thing finally goes in, we’re going to have residences down there, we’re going to have people working down there, and so I’m fighting...”

GECA has been railing against the proposal of putting the freight yard, which would attract hundreds of trucks each day, 365 days a year, near neighborhoods. Residents have said it would decrease their property values, compromise their health and jeopardize their quality of life.

According to project sponsors Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) and CSX, there is not a hard deadline for selecting a site but it could occur by the end of 2012. Last month, MDOT and CSX visited Elkridge to update citizens on preliminary findings at the four candidate sites.

At the Dec. 6 GECA meeting, Elkridge residents presented a slide show contesting the information that transportation officials presented.

Among other developments that emerged at the meeting:

- County Executive Ken Ulman is pressing MDOT for more information about the project.
- State and county legislators are investigating the economic implications of building a freight facility in Howard County.
- Scheffenacker said that he would like to share his legal counsel with GECA.

Previously, residents were less than welcoming of Scheffenacker's development. "We'd been fighting him for years," said GECA president Howard Johnson, in an interview after the Dec. 6 meeting. Johnson said that Scheffenacker approached GECA a few months ago to discuss working together in opposition to the Hanover and Race Road site.

"After talking to your [GECA] committee for the intermodal, we have hired four attorneys to fight this," said Scheffenacker at the Dec. 6 meeting, "and we've decided it would be good if our attorneys were your attorneys, too."

GECA planned to meet with MDOT on Dec. 7 to discuss the intermodal project status and what its members say are inconsistencies in data presented to the public at workshops in November.

"We're looking forward to the fight," said Scheffenacker.